

Sine Die Address
Governor Dave Heineman
One-Hundredth Legislature, Second Session
April 17, 2008

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislature, Distinguished Guests, Friends and Fellow Nebraskans. This has been a very good and a very productive session.

Today we conclude a historic legislative session for our great state. This marks the end of the 100th Legislature, and 15 Senators will not return next year. You can be very proud of your collective accomplishments. You will be missed. We are very proud of your service to the people of this state.

I want to call attention to the 38 years of service of your senior member, Senator Ernie Chambers. From 1971 through 2008, Senator Chambers has been a man of principle, an exceptional orator and a defender of the downtrodden. While Nebraskans may not always agree with Senator Chambers, they do respect him.

I've enjoyed working with every one of you and I wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

In reflecting upon this session, it is readily apparent that this Legislature addressed many issues to keep Nebraska moving forward. Two of the most significant accomplishments were balancing the budget by reducing spending and preserving a robust Cash Reserve. With signs of an economic slowdown approaching, these two actions were essential for Nebraska's financial stability. Thank you to Senators Heidemann, Engel, Fulton, Harms, Kruse, Nantkes, Nelson, Synowiecki, and Wightman for your resolve in reducing spending and protecting the Cash Reserve Fund.

Working together, we expanded our business incentives and furthered our goal of creating higher paying jobs for our young people by passing the Nebraska Super Advantage. We lowered corporate income tax rates, which is especially important to small businesses. Thank you to Senators Janssen, Burling, Gay, and Lautenbaugh for LB 895 and LB 888.

We also resolved the future of one of the state's most enduring traditions – the State Fair. The Nebraska State Fair will now have the opportunity for a fresh start in Grand Island and the University of Nebraska can begin the development of Innovation Park. Thank you Senator Erdman.

LB 1157 marks the dawning of a new era in education assessment for Nebraska. This is an opportunity to focus on educational excellence and academic accountability. This bill will put the focus on student learning. Thank you to Senators Raikes, Adams and Avery.

This Legislature has also addressed some very difficult issues. Thank you to Senators Ashford, Lathrop, and Christensen for negotiating a compromise on cloning and stem cell research.

We have taken steps to increase government transparency and accountability. Thank you Senator Howard for your assistance in passing LB 782, which will help Health and Human Services leaders share more information with Nebraskans in some of the most challenging cases they face.

Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services and my office are looking forward to partnering with the Legislature in addressing the challenges of the developmentally disabled in a straightforward, direct and effective manner. I want to emphasize that I am committed to improving the quality of care for the developmentally disabled at the Beatrice State Developmental Center.

This year we also fulfilled our promise to farmers in the Republican River Basin, whose partnership is necessary for compliance with the Republican River Compact. Thank you to Senators Carlson and Loudon for LB 1094.

Finally, thank you Senator Stuthman for Nebraska's Safe Haven law. The Department of Health and Human Services, hospitals and law enforcement have already begun discussions on how to ensure the best outcomes for children when this new law is utilized.

Again, I want to congratulate you on a very good and a very productive session.

I began this session by saying that together we can make tomorrow better than today. Working together, we have made a difference for our state. We are making progress, but we still have work to do. I look forward to next year as we continue to reshape Nebraska's future.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for your service to our state.